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ABSTRACT

This study guide offers a different approach, teleconferencing, to new information, ideas, and resources on the film, "To Kill a Mockingbird." Following general information on "then and now," the guide consists of sections entitled: Preparing to Teach TKM: Special Considerations (by Charles Suhor and Larry Bell); Historical Background; Looking Closely at the Film; Looking Closely at the Novel; Pre-Teleconference Activities for Students (including brainstorming and discussing, filling out an "opinionnaire," and exploring stereotypes); NCTE Readings and Resources, Guide Writers/Planners; Program Host and Special Guests; and Program Descriptions and Registration Form. The section of the guide on "Preparing to Teach TKM" notes that the guide was developed by inner city and suburban teachers, humanities scholars, and teacher educators who raised many important points about a range of issues; this section also suggests that individual teachers and English departments can select literary materials in accordance with a published selection process that clearly affirms the criteria for their choices. Web site information is also noted. (NKA)

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Teacher Study Guide

To Kill a Mockingbird: Then and Now

A 35th Anniversary Celebration

ED 406 711

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Thursday, April 24, 1997 • 11 AM - 12 Noon ET

Lyceum 2: Teleconference on the Film
Friday, April 25, 1997 • 11 AM - 1 PM ET

Teacher Orientation Workshop/Teleconference
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Live Satellite Distance Learning - A Definition

Live Satellite Distance Learning by Prince William Network (PWN) is the live, interactive broadcast of high-interest educational programs to school sites and school districts regionally or nationally. Programs are accompanied by a study guide and Internet support prepared by teacher-based instructional design teams. The guide and Internet provide resources and activities that help prepare students to get the most out of each interactive learning broadcast. Proper prepping of students raises their level of anticipation, participation, and interactivity with the program guests by phone, fax, or e-mail and takes advantage of student interest in technology-based learning.

Scheduling

Live Satellite Distance Learning special events like this Lyceum seldom fit into the school-bell schedule. But teachers across the country who value the exciting learning which occurs make special arrangements for their students to participate live by scheduling "in-school field trips" on the day(s) of broadcast.

The Live Satellite "Lyceum"

In ancient Greece, the grove where Aristotle taught was called the Lyceum—a gathering place where important public discussions were held. The Live Satellite Lyceum is a distance learning format in which PWN gathers special program guests like authors, scholars, etc. around a topic and creates an interactive teleconference.

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You must register to receive satellite coordinates.

Mockingbird Website and Home Page: http://pwnetwork.pwcs.edu

For the next three years, PWN and the English Department at Woodbridge High School will maintain an interactive Mockingbird Website with Home Page. A Webmaster with student website managers will design, maintain and update links to a rich bounty of resources with links to sites nationally and internationally. The Mockingbird Website is an expanded version of this Study Guide and will provide links and resources that refresh and encourage the relevant study of *TKM* for our times. The Website presents links to these areas: Lyceum Descriptions, Preparation Activities for the Broadcast, Preparation Activities for the Novel, Instructional Activities, Historical Archives, Discussion Groups, and Other Online Resources.

WEB SITE Look for this symbol indicating that expanded information from the guide is available on the Website.

Partners

Prince William Network

PWN is the distance learning arm of Prince William County Public Schools in northern Virginia. PWN consistently wins national awards for its K-12 distance learning programs and is best known for its Live Satellite Field Trips, Kennedy Center Performing Arts Series, and special event programs like the Lyceum on *To Kill a Mockingbird: Then and Now*.

Prince William Network's Partners:

National Council of Teachers of English

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) brings to this project excellent NCTE lead teachers and resources in the planning and writing of this 16-page Teacher Study Guide, which will appear in the April issue of NCTE's *English Journal* magazine (circulation 60,000).

American Film Institute

The American Film Institute (AFI), the nation's leading film art and culture organization, is helping reunite actors and members of the creative team from *To Kill a Mockingbird*. AFI's partnership encourages English teachers working through NCTE's Assembly of Media Arts to continue bringing the study of American film classics alongside literary works in the English curriculum.

National Endowment for the Humanities

Recognizing that *TKM* has become intertwined in the fabric of our nation's literary, social, civil and cinematic history, NEH awarded a "Technology In The Humanities" Humanities Focus Grant to Prince William Network. This made possible the planning, collaboration, research and writing for the Teacher Study Guide and the Lyceum.

The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive

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WEB SITE

For expanded parts of this guide visit the Mockingbird Website at **http://pwnetwork.pwcs.edu**
Visit the **Special Projects** area on the Website for activities specially designed to prepare students for the teleconferences.

Cover Photo: American Film Institute Stills Collection

SCOUT'S VISION:

The vision to reunite the cast and creative team from the *TKM* movie, putting them in touch with today's students who were not born when the film was made, belongs to Mary Badham (Scout). Her concern was that the telling of the story of how the film was made – the oral history of the making of TKM—would be lost to this and subsequent generations of young people: "This film not only carries a message that is crucial to get across to each new generation of young people, but I want them to know that something very special went into the making of the film for each person who was part of the creative team. The film was made with a mission. And it is important that this story be told to this generation of students so that they can pass it on as part of how the film is remembered." Mary shared these words with Prince William County Schools during a 1994 presentation. Her strong belief in the power of this film to bring people together around the issues that are so hard to face and her desire to pass on the story of the making of *TKM* has led to this 35th anniversary celebration of the film's release and to this Lyceum on *To Kill a Mockingbird: Then and Now*.

Many high schools in America teach *To Kill a Mockingbird (TKM)* every year, and we are going to celebrate it! One of our special guests for the lyceum is Claudia Durst Johnson, noted Harper Lee scholar and author. Johnson has written the text, *Understanding To Kill a Mockingbird: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historic Documents*, and she will share her ideas with us in Program 1. Johnson has maintained a personal relationship with the very private author over the years and will share her insights about Harper Lee. We begin the Study Guide with her reminder of why *TKM* is deserving of this forum:

> "Harper Lee's novel is one of the best-selling books in the nation's history. Within a year *To Kill a Mockingbird* had sold 500,000 copies. By 1975 11,113,909 copies had sold, and by 1982 over 15,000,000 had sold. By 1992 18 million copies of paperback editions alone had sold. It has never been out of print in 35 years. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is frequently cited by readers as the book that has made the biggest difference in their lives. The novel's enduring impact goes beyond the period when integration and the struggle for equal rights were paramount. Its influence has been enduring because it allows the reader, through the lives of children, 'to walk around in the shoes' of people who are different from ourselves. The novel challenges our stereotypes – of the Southerner, the African American, the eccentric, the child, the young lady. At the same time that many people see characters and social situations in different ways after reading the novel, they also recapture some part of their own youth in the story with its characters. The novel's universal and lasting appeal comes in part from the reader's nostalgia for the time of innocence in which children live before harsh truths enter their lives."
>
> —Claudia Durst Johnson

Read through this Study Guide. It offers a fresh approach to new information, ideas, and resources. You may photocopy any parts of the Guide that would be useful as handouts for your students in preparation for the teleconferences.

You may videotape the live broadcasts for use within your school and use the tapes as a resource for one year. Permission to continue use after one year is required by written request to Prince William Network.

Preparing to Teach *To Kill a Mockingbird*

by **Charles Suhor,** Deputy Executive Director, National Council of Teachers of English, and
Larry Bell, Supervisor of Multicultural Education, Prince William County Public Schools

During a discussion among the inner city and suburban teachers, humanities scholars and teacher educators who developed this study guide, many important points were raised.

Teachers in the *To Kill A Mockingbird (TKM)* group reported that the novel is a powerful reading experience for their students, many of whom articulate for the first time their feelings about a wide range of issues. Class discussions about Scout's growing insight into her father's character, evil and injustice in the world, and relationships among classes and races are intensely interesting—but they are not without hazard. Students, and often their parents, sometimes have difficulty with the profane language, racial epithets, absence of a Black perspective, complex family and social relationships, and violence in the novel.

Of course, good literature often poses thorny moral questions and depicts unpleasant aspects of life. But the *TKM* group agreed that a curriculum created with the goal of avoiding all controversial materials and depicting only optimistic viewpoints and cheerful outcomes would, at best, present a distorted view of life. The group viewed *TKM* as an excellent opportunity to help young people deal with many of the same issues they will face in life. They further noted that certain general procedures can be instituted to encourage a positive reception of this and similar instructional materials.

To begin with, individual teachers and English departments can select literary materials in accordance with a published selection process that clearly affirms the criteria for their choices. Institutionalizing such a policy is a buffer against a challenger's claim that an excellent work such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been capriciously placed in the English program. Advance announcement of reading lists and works to be studied is another way of dealing openly with students, parents, and community constituencies—although it should be clear that students' readings are not rigidly limited by such lists. (See "Guidelines for Selection..." and "Students' Right to Read" in the NCTE Readings and Resources list.)

In many schools and districts, a student or parent who objects to a particular work is given the option of selecting a substitute work with parallel themes and of similar literary value. This policy enables the student to pursue worthwhile study while ensuring that no individual parent's or group's objection forecloses on *other* students' right to read. Mildred D. Taylor's *Let the Circle be Unbroken* and Earnest Gaines' *Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* , for example, are award-winning books that teachers have recommended as alternatives or companion pieces to *TKM*.

Equally important is the handling of *TKM* in the classroom. As with selection of works for study, the assumption here is that the teacher is a trained professional who proceeds knowledgeably and sensitively. Such a teacher will carefully choose *when* to teach a work that requires more prepping of students and a longer duration of study. It follows that a teacher would generally be advised not to begin the year or a block schedule with a novel like *TKM* that explores difficult social issues or a work that is extremely difficult to read.

The sensitive teacher will also be aware that what seems wonderful and powerful to one group of students may seem degrading to another. For example, the scene where members of the Black community relegated to the balcony stand in respect when Atticus passes may be viewed as a powerful moment to some students while for others the scene may be humiliating, and a chilling reminder of the legacy of powerlessness in America.

The *TKM* group strongly recommends that having students read aloud racial epithets or slurs such as "nigger" not take place in the classroom. One teacher reported that tension was generated when a student in a racially integrated class was asked to read aloud a passage from *TKM* in which the "N-word" appeared. The wrenching discomfort that arose in this classroom situation could have been avoided. Predictably, reading racial slurs and profanities aloud will have a different impact than seeing such words on the printed page and then talking about them in open class discussion.

The *TKM* group agreed that a key to the study of controversial works is the teacher's ability to build and sustain a sense of the classroom as a safe environment. This is where prepping activities will be crucial. For example, having students discuss gender issues then and now, race relations then and now, etc. can progress to more difficult topics such as the origin and the disparaging use of the "N-word." When trust exists among the teacher and students, discussion of virtually any issue that appears in a literary context can usually be carried on productively with prepping.

Of course, student learning does not begin and end in the classroom. Students often leave the safe haven of classroom dialogue and return to school and community environments characterized by intolerance and adolescent ridicule. Addressing this, one teacher suggested ten minutes or so of debriefing at the end of classes in which students have been engaged in intensive discussion. Such debriefing has both the content-learning benefit of summing up key points discussed and the added value of providing students with a sense of closure, fortifying them with confidence in themselves as individuals capable of civility in disagreement. Teachers can then gauge the effect the discussion has had on various students and act accordingly, e.g., deal with problems individually.

Discussions about *TKM* during the three-day meeting were ebullient and wide-ranging, resulting in the wonderful array of new materials in this teaching guide and on the Mockingbird Website. The considerations above are advanced as prudent advice and not red flags about teaching potentially controversial works. The *TKM* group agreed that self-censorship rooted in fear of challenges can be a devastating form of book-banning, giving in to what Henry James once called "imagination of disaster." Using *TKM*, the teacher has an excellent opportunity as a curriculum-builder to engage in creative problem solving, taking time for prepping, thus providing the most edifying literary experiences possible for today's students.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prepared by Claudia Durst Johnson, Harper Lee scholar and author, Dr. Joanne V. Gabbin, James Madison University Professor, and Catherine Turner, TKM Lead Teacher, Prince William County Public Schools

Claudia Johnson is a featured guest on *To Kill a Mockingbird:Then and Now* - Program 1: The Novel. Her personal acquaintance with the author and her text, *Understanding To Kill a Mockingbird: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historic Documents* (Greenwood Press), will help focus our discussion with panelists.

Scottsboro Trials – The Novel's Setting in the 1930s

American Film Institute Stills Collection

There are many parallels between the trial of Tom Robinson in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and one of the most notorious series of trials in the nation's history the Scottsboro Trials. On March 25, 1931, a freight train was stopped in Paint Rock, a tiny community in Northern Alabama, and nine young African American men who had been riding the rails were arrested. As two white women—one underage—descended from the freight cars, they accused the men of raping them on the train. Within a month the first man was found guilty and sentenced to death. There followed a series of sensational trials condemning the other men solely on the testimony of the older woman, a known prostitute, who was attempting to avoid prosecution under the Mann Act, prohibiting taking a minor across state lines for immoral purposes, like prostitution. Although none of the accused were executed, a number remained on death row for many years. The case was not settled until 1976 with the pardon of the last of the Scottsboro defendants. (See "Historical Context: The Scottsboro Trials"; *Understanding To Kill a Mockingbird: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historic Documents* by Claudia Durst Johnson, pp. 15 -81.) Some of the parallels between the Scottsboro trials and the trial of Tom Robinson are shown in the chart below. **(You may photocopy charts and other materials in the guide as handouts for your students.)**

Parallels Between the Scottsboro and Tom Robinson Trials

The Scottsboro Trials	Tom Robinson's Trial
• Took place in the 1930s	• Occurs in the 1930s
• Took place in northern Alabama	• Takes place in southern Alabama
• Began with a charge of rape made by white women against African American men	• Begins with a charge of rape made by a white woman against an African American man
• The poor white status of the accusers was a critical issue.	• The poor white status of Mayella is a critical issue.
• A central figure was a heroic judge, a member of the Alabama Bar who overturned a guilty jury verdict against African American men.	• A central figure is Atticus, lawyer, legislator and member of the Alabama Bar, who defends an African American man.
• This judge went against public sentiment in trying to protect the rights of the African American defendants.	• Atticus arouses anger in the communtiy in trying to defend Tom Robinson.
• The first juries failed to include any African Americans, a situation which causeed the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the guilty verdict.	• The verdict is rendered by a jury of poor white residents of Old Sarum.
• The jury ignored evidence, for example, that the women suffered no injuries.	• The jury ignores evidence, for example, that Tom has a useless left arm.
• Attitudes about Southern women and poor whites complicated the trial.	• Attitudes about Southern women and poor whites complicate the trial of Tom Robinson.

The Author and the Book

Nelle Harper Lee, the author of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, had many childhood experiences which are similar to those of her narrator, Scout Finch.

Harper Lee's Childhood:

- Grew up in 1930s – rural southern Alabama town
- Father – Amasa Lee – attorney who served in state legislature in Alabama
- Older brother and young neighbor (Truman Capote) are playmates.
- Harper Lee - an avid reader
- Six years old when Scottsboro trials were meticulously covered in state and local newspapers

"Scout" (Jean Louise) Finch's Childhood:

- Grew up in 1930s – rural southern Alabama town
- Father – Atticus Finch – attorney who served in state legislature in Alabama
- Older brother and young neighbor (Dill) are playmates.
- Scout reads before she enters school; reads *Mobile Register* paper in first grade.
- Six years old when the trial of Tom Robinson takes place

WEB SITE Visit "Preparation Activities for the Broadcast" for expanded information on **"The Author and the Book."**

The Civil Rights Era – Setting the Historical Context for the Novel and the Film

Lee wrote the novel during the beginning of the Civil Rights era (from about 1955 to 1958). Alabama was very much in the news at this time with the Montgomery bus boycott, Martin Luther King's rise to leadership, and Autherine Lucy's attempt to enter the University of Alabama graduate school. Harper Lee, who was well known on campus as editor of the politcially satirical student newspaper, graduated from the university and entered law school, leaving one semester short of receiving a law degree. Lee's book was published in 1960—a time of tumultuous events and racial strife as the struggle in the Civil Rights movement grew violent and spread into cities across the nation, and into the American consciousness on TV screens and the nightly news. The novel shot to the top of the *New York Times* Best Seller list, as it began to make its remarkable impact on a divided nation. A year after its publication Lee worked as a consultant on the film adaptation of the novel and the screenplay written by Horton Foote. The film was released in 1962 and went on to receive five Academy Award nominations, winning three.

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Publication/Release of *To Kill a Mockingbird* in the Civil Rights Era: A Chronology

1954 United States Supreme Court rules in Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, that racial segregation in the public schools is inherently unequal and, therefore, illegal.

1955 Rosa Parks is arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery city bus.

1955 Boycott of Montgomery County city buses begins officially.

1955 Emmett Till, a young African American man, is murdered while visiting the South.

1956 Autherine Lucy receives a letter granting permission to enroll for classes at the U. of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.

1956 Home of Martin Luther King, Jr. is bombed in Montgomery. King is a leader in the boycott and designated spokesperson.

1956 Motions are filed in U.S. District Court calling for an end to bus segregation.

1956 Violence erupts on the campus of the U. of Alabama and in the streets of Tuscaloosa; continuing for three days. (TV evening news and Movietone newsreels showing "Week In Review" newsclips in between feature films in movie theaters documented these events.)

1956 Autherine Lucy is forced to flee U. of Alabama campus; the university's Board of Trustees bars her from campus. (TV/ Movietone)

1956 Warrants are issued for arrest of 115 leaders of the Montgomery bus boycott.

1956 Autherine Lucy ordered by the courts to be re-admitted to U. of Alabama, only to be expelled by Board of Trustees. (TV / Movietone)

1956 U.S. Supreme Court decides in favor of Montgomery bus boycotters, by ruling bus segregation illegal.

1956 African Americans first board buses in Montgomery, according to a first-come, first-served basis. (TV/Movietone)

1957 Federal troops sent to Little Rock, Arkansas, to enforce court-ordered desegregation of schools. (TV/Movietone)

1960 Publication of ***To Kill A Mockingbird*** in the Fall (Shoots to top of *NY Times* Best Seller list) ...In Greensboro, N.C., attempt to integrate lunch counters is thwarted (TV/Movietone).

1961 Charlayne Hunter enters the U. of Georgia through lines of jeering white protesters (TV/Movietone)

1961 Freedom Riders begin arriving in the deep South to test desegregation. Violence necessitates the deployment of federal troops. (Major TV news event/Movietone)

1961 Violence erupts at U. of Mississippi over integration (featured on TV networks, in newspapers and magazines/Movietone).

1962 ***To Kill A Mockingbird***, is released; the screen adaptation by Horton Foote receives 5 Academy Award nominations.

1963 Dogs and power hoses are directed at peaceful demonstrators in Birmingham, Alabama; America watched on TV news.

1963 Three Civil Rights workers are found murdered in Mississippi.

1963 Massive Civil Rights March is held in Washington, D.C.

1964 The Civil Rights Act is passed.

1965 March for Voting Rights is held in Selma, Alabama.

American Film Institute Stills Collection

Historical Background Pre-Teleconference Discussion Questions

1. Compare the kinds and level and frequency of violence in the society of Maycomb in the 1930s and violence in American communities today.
2. What changes have taken place between the time of the novel and today? Consider, for example, family relationships then and now; use of language then and now; expectations of the behavior of little girls then and now; the use of guns to resolve conflict then and now; justice in the courts, then and now, (e.g., the O. J. Simpson trials).
3. Conduct research on how the book and the film were received by the public and by book reviewers. See, for example, issues of the *New York Times*, *Time* magazine, and other sources beginning around autumn of 1960. What kind of impact does it appear the book had on the public; on society? Document and share with class.

Looking Closely at the Film

Prepared by William Costanzo, Professor of English and Film, Westchester Community College
Bill Costanzo teaches English and film at Westchester Community College in Valhalla, NY.
A former chair of NCTE's Committee on Film Study and director of the Media Commission,
Bill speaks and writes regularly on the connections between English and media education. His book, *Reading the Movies*, is available through NCTE. Bill is a featured guest on *To Kill a Mockingbird: Then and Now* - Program 2: The Film.

In her introduction to Horton Foote's published screenplay of the novel, Harper Lee wrote, "If the integrity of a film adaptation is measured by the degree to which the novelist's intent is preserved, Mr. Foote's screenplay should be studied as a classic." There are many good reasons for studying the movie in an English class. First, it is very accessible: easy to get (on video tape or laser disc) and to understand (for its story, its characters, its themes). Second, it is a well-made, perennially popular film. When it appeared in 1962, the film was honored by five Oscar nominations and Academy Awards for Best Actor (to Gregory Peck), Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Black-and-White Art Direction. It also won special humanitarian awards for its treatment of racial injustice. Finally, it is a landmark in the art of adaptation, beginning (in Harper Lee's words) "a new era of responsibility in Hollywood." As such, *To Kill a Mockingbird* offers a case study for "comparative literature" in an age when more and more stories are told through the medium of movies.

Directed by Robert Mulligan
Screenplay by Horton Foote
Edited by Aaron Stell
Set Design by Oliver Emert
Title Design by Steven Frankfort
Produced by Alan Pakula for Universal
Cinematography by Russell Harlan
Art Direction by Alexander Golitzen and Henry Bumstead
Music by Elmer Bernstein
Released in 1962 - Running Time: 129 minutes

WEB SITE For a complete listing of cast members refer to "Preparation Activities for the Broadcast"

Strategies For Teaching *To Kill a Mockingbird*: The Film

Here are four ways of looking at a film that teachers have found useful.

Viewer Response:

Help students to clarify their personal responses to the film. Ask them to describe and account for their reactions to particular scenes and to the movie as a whole. Get them to notice where their responses differ and to weigh the possible explanations for these differences. The process of comparing responses and trying to understand the responses of others gives students a good chance to "walk around in someone else's shoes."

The Art and Craft of Filmmaking:

To appreciate a movie like *To Kill a Mockingbird*, it helps to know something about the medium of motion pictures: how films are made, who contributes to their production, and how the basic elements of filmmaking—like lighting, sound, and editing—shape a film into a work of art. The Lyceum offers you and your students a rare opportunity to ask the artists themselves about what happens behind the screen.

The Why and How of Adaptation:

Why are so many books made into movies? What is involved in transferring a story from the page to the screen? What are the benefits and risks of adaptation? By posing such questions, you can encourage your students to think about what is lost and what is gained when they see a movie rather than reading a book.

Evaluation:

What makes a good story? What standards do we bring to stories told on film? What makes an adaptation successful? Screening *To Kill a Mockingbird* can be a good occasion for considering such questions of quality and judgment. Get your students thinking about movies with some general questions before and after your screening of the film.

WEB SITE For Costanzo's excellent **Pre-viewing** and **Post-viewing** questions visit "Preparation Activities for the Broadcast."

Elements of Fiction in Film

Since films tell stories, they involve many of the elements of fiction that novels do. After students have read the book, you might look at the way these elements are treated in the film.

CHARACTER. Movies speak to us in images and sounds, so every character is a performance, an interpretation of the script. Our conception of character depends heavily on the way a particular actor looks, acts, and speaks. Note how the main characters are introduced. Scout swings into the frame from a tree. Dill is first seen from a high angle as a small figure almost lost among the leaves of a cabbage patch. We hear Jem's voice coming from the treehouse before we ever see him. *What do the entrances of these and other characters emphasize about them?*

POINT OF VIEW. Point of view in film is often conveyed literally, by the position of the camera. We see Jem in his treehouse in a low angle shot from Scout's point of view. We see Dill in a high angle shot from Jem's position in the tree. Since most of the story is narrated from Scout's perspective, the camera usually shows us only what she would see. A good example occurs when the three children enter the courthouse to find Atticus. Scout and Jem lift up Dill so he can peer into the courtroom, and we are limited to what Dill sees and what they hear. That makes the shift in perspective all the more striking after the children leave and Atticus faces Bob Ewell as one adult to another. *Where else in the film does the camera make you aware of a particular character's point of view?"*

SETTING. The film establishes the story's time and place with a voice-over narration, taken directly from the novel, spoken over images of rural Maycomb. If a picture is worth a thousand words, the camera can set a scene in an instant. On the other hand, while novelists can construct vast panoramas with a pen, filmmakers must labor with hammer and nails, which may explain why a director might exclude a fire or a church scene from a script. *Where in the film does location seem most important? How do the filmmakers help us to believe that we are in another time and place?*

PLOT. Since a film has less time to tell its story than a novel does, the plot is often streamlined, designed for a single sitting. Notice what the film omits from Lee's meandering story: characters like Uncle Jack and Mr. Avery, details like Mrs. Dubose's morphine addiction, and the seventeen shots that kill Tom Robinson. *How many of these omissions might be explained as concessions to length?* Some viewers have observed that the film concentrates on the story's two main strands, Boo Radley and Tom Robinson, and weaves them into a tighter narrative. *Do you and your students agree?*

SYMBOL. Symbolic objects and actions are more literally defined on the screen than on the page. *How does the movie represent the symbols found in the novel? Did you imagine these things differently when reading than when you saw them on the screen?* Pay particular attention to the opening title sequence and the symbolic objects used in the cigar box. *Why do you think the title designer chose these objects? If you have unanswered questions about the opening credit sequence, decide how you might pose them to the designer during the teleconference.*

Elements of Film

Although films and novels use common elements of fiction to tell stories, filmmakers use special tools to develop character, setting, plot, point of view, symbols, and tone. Invite your students to think in cinematic terms by drawing their attention to these elements of film.

Acting: How do the actors interpret their roles? Do they look and act as you imagined them when you read the book? How believable are their performances?

Camera Work: How does the camera frame events? Notice when it moves, shifts angles, or otherwise changes the focus of attention. What does this camera work emphasize in each shot?

Lighting and Set Design: Consider the location chosen for each scene. How was the place made to look as if it belonged to the 1930s? How would you describe the overall tone or atmosphere? How does the lighting contribute to this atmosphere?

Editing: How are the separate shots within a scene combined into a continuous sequence? Notice how often the camera cuts, fades, or dissolves into a new view of events. Consider the reasons for each of these transitions.

The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive

Script: Horton Foote, the script writer, had to capture the 300+ pages of Harper Lee's story in a 129-minute film. What decisions did he make? Notice where he trimmed the story or rearranged its parts. Can you justify these changes? How successful is his adaptation on the whole?

Sound: *TKM* uses all four forms of sound available to filmmakers: music, sound effects, voice-over, and dialogue. Notice how Elmer Bernstein's original music helps to create and guide the story's moods. Listen for the creaking stairs, the crickets, and other sound effects that contribute to these moods. What does Kim Stanley's voice-over narration add above and beyond the dialogue?

Photos: The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive

Scene Analysis

A good way to see how these elements of film work together is to analyze particular scenes. Watch the same scene several times, using the remote control features of your VCR or laser disc player to scan, slow down, and freeze the image. Note how the scene moves the story forward, sets the time and place, develops characters, establishes a point of view, creates a mood, or suggests symbolic meanings. If you have access to Horton Foote's screenplay (NY: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), use it to study the art of adaptation. The goal here is to understand how scenes are constructed: what artistic and technological decisions were made and why.

Sample Scenes for Analysis

Opening Credit Sequence.

The objects that appear behind the opening credits include a pocket watch, harmonica, pearl necklace, whistle, marbles, and a child's drawing of a bird—items that gain meaning as the story unfolds. The sequence is a good introduction for the story's symbolism and themes. It also shows (to quote Harper Lee again) how a film can have "a life of its own as a work of art." Notice how the camera moves in, like a child's vision, to closeups of these valued objects, tracking from left to right along the row of treasures carefully arranged. Notice how the nostalgic music and humming of a child create a mood. And notice what happens to the drawing at the end of the sequence.

Boo Radley's Porch.

The night scene in which the children sneak up to the Radley house dramatizes their fascination with and their fear of the unknown. How do the filmmakers use lighting, music, sound effects, and camera work to heighten suspense? How suspenseful does the scene seem to viewers today?

The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive

WEB SITE For a detailed scene analysis by Costanzo, visit **Looking Closely at the Film** under "Preparation Activites for the Broadcast."

Looking Closely at the Novel

Prepared by Gwendolyn Alexander, Judith Kelly, Dr. Charles Suhor, Dr. William Costanzo, and Mark Kozlowski

The Mockingbird Website contains a rich set of response-based study questions for discussion of the novel, suitable for initial reading or review of *To Kill a Mockingbird (TKM)*. The study questions focus on both student response and elements of literature. The questions on the Website presuppose that students have read the novel; but if they are viewing the teleconference as preparatory experience for studying it, you can use these materials during or after their reading or viewing *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive

WEB SITE To find challenging topics with study questions like the sample below be sure to visit the Website.

Language

1. Language is a powerful tool in this novel—the language of the children, the eloquence of Atticus, and the language of the townspeople which reflects their attitudes and often their prejudices. This language reveals the power of words to establish what (and who) society values most. Language choice and style have the power to confer status and value, to elevate, and to wound. Notice the importance attributed to names and titles in the novel. How does the way the characters in the novel address or nickname the people below reveal status, entitlement, and power?

	SAMPLE ANSWERS:
Mr. Jem	at 12 he is addressed with a title of respect
Mrs. Dubose	married white women with title
Miss Maudie	unmarried white woman with title
Atticus Finch - *Mr.* Finch	a white man of title and status in the community
Calpurnia, *Cal*	Black woman, no title, no status
Tom Robinson	Black man, no title, no status
Mayella Ewell	poor white woman, no title, no status reacts angrily when called "Miss" by Atticus
Rev. Sykes	Black minister with title of recognition
Boo Radley (Is "Boo" his real name?)	simple white man; nick-named by children
Scout, Miss *Jean Louise* Finch	white child of Atticus; has title at age 6

2. What lessons does Atticus attempt to teach Scout about the use of racial slurs to refer to Tom Robinson and other African Americans in the novel?
3. Harper Lee attempts to portray several kinds of dialect in the novel—the language of the poor whites, poor Blacks, small children, genteel Southern ladies, an educated lawyer, and others. Did her renderings of these different dialects strike you as realistic? If not, which language styles seemed to be less credible?
4. What lesson about language does Calpurnia try to teach to Scout when Calpurnia says that she has one way of talking at home and another way of talking at the Finch household? Do you agree that people often communicate differently in different environments rather than having only a single language style? Why?

WEB SITE Visit **Looking Closely At The Novel** under "Preparation Activities for the Broadcast" for study questions in these areas: **Character, Point of View, Setting, Plot, Symbol,** and a list of suggested **Projects.**

Pre-Teleconference Activities for Students

Prepared by NCTE Team Members: Gwendolyn Alexander, Judith Kelly, Dr. Charles Suhor, and Dr. William Costanzo; Prince William County Lead Teachers: Penny Lake, Phyllis Peterson, and Sandra Munnell

Whether or not your students have studied the novel or the film version of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the activities below will help prepare them for consideration of many of the themes likely to be discussed on the live, interactive teleconferences. Like prereading and prewriting exercises, these sample activities engage students productively in initial reflection and interaction. As students explore their own experiences, ideas, and feelings about themes and issues in *TKM*, they develop personal frames of reference for the presentations—and the interactive discussions—that will take place on the teleconferences.

Activity 1—Brainstorming and Discussing: Heroes

Place the words "heroes" and "heroism" on the chalkboard. Ask students to state words, phrases, and names that come to mind as they consider heroes and heroism. Jot down their responses as they brainstorm. As the responses wane, consider whether it would be useful to ask for further or more varied reactions. For example, if students have given only names, ask for common nouns—perhaps synonyms or near-synonyms such as "courage"; or ask for places or objects that they associate with heroes and heroism. If the heroes named are mostly in a particular category such as sports or TV stars, ask whether any figures from the past are heroes to them; or whether fictional figures are heroes; or people who are not necessarily famous; or people who are highly regarded by their parents, or by people in other times and cultures.

The Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive

The final student list should provide excellent raw material for follow-up discussion on points such as the following:

- Choose two or more heroes on the list and tell what they have in common. Choose two or more and tell how their heroic qualities differ.
- Do people from different cultures and different generations seem to have different kinds of heroes? If so, how do they differ?
- Which heroes, if any, are people who did not necessarily show physical bravery but showed courageous moral character?
- Is the list dominated by particular categories of heroes—e.g., celebrities, males, whites, people of color, younger people, older people, Americans, living people, dead people, etc.? If so, what might be the reasons for these emphases?

Consider whether these and other points of discussion can be related to the characters in *TKM*, helping your students explore and assess Harper Lee's ideas about heroes and heroism as expressed in her characters.

Activity 2—Our Words, Others' Words

Ask your students to think of words and phrases they commonly use that older generations don't use. Write the words they cite on the chalkboard. For each word, ask them to identify a parallel word or phrase that older generations used. List the words or phrase pairs side by side on a chart. (You can be a resource if students have difficulty coming up with a "generational" word or phrase by giving the word or phrase used when you were a teenager.)

Many of the words will be slang. The students might state a slang usage such as "digs" for "house," and a different slang usage such as "pad" can be identified for their parents' generation. Further, an obsolete word such as "domicile" might be associated with even earlier generations. Common objects often undergo slang evolutions—consider, for example, generational slang words for car, money, or clothing.

Interjections are another interesting and often amusing source of language differences among generations. Students

might seek different expressions over time for interjections such as *gee whiz, right on, fiddlesticks, yuk, hip, oh my goodness*, etc.

Next ask your students to work in small groups to develop five or six sentences of dialogue that make use of words peculiar to their own generation, and another five or six sentences of dialogue—preferably but not necessarily on the same subject—as spoken by people from another generation. Stress that the critical point is to keep the language of each dialogue appropriate to the speakers in their own time period.

After the groups read aloud and discuss their original dialogues, introduce the concept of *realistic dialogue*. Point out that skilled authors attempt to portray speech patterns and vocabulary that reflect the language of the times and the environments in which the characters live. To ascribe words or language styles that are historically or culturally inaccurate for the characters in a work would be a literary flaw.

The writer's concern with realistic language may result in words and passages that some readers find offensive. In *TKM*, Harper Lee uses the racial epithet "nigger" and words such as "damn" and "rutting" (for sexual intercourse). *Realism* is also evident in negative events in the novel, such as a rape and a murder. Point out that such language and events are only part of the larger theme and moral vision of the author. Also point out that some writers go beyond the need for realism in depicting language and events, using inflammatory words and phrases and horrid events sensationalistically or for shock value. Note that distinguishing between dialogue handled skillfully and dialogue that is exaggerated, used sensationalistically, or otherwise off target is an important *critical thinking* skill for readers and viewers. In this manner your students can be prepared to discuss Harper Lee's use of words/dialogue in *TKM* during the first teleconference.

Activity 3 – Opinionnaire

Ask your students to give their initial, gut reactions to the 12 statements in preparation for a discussion of the statements. Assure them that their responses can be simply first impressions—starting points for further discussion about degrees of agreement or disagreement with the ideas in the statements. Ask them to write "1" beside the statement if they strongly agree, "2" if they agree somewhat; "3" if they disagree somewhat; and "4" if they strongly disagree. They might jot down comments about a statement that aroused mixed feelings or about the wording of or the premise underlying a particular statement.

Discuss the statements, perhaps inviting students to begin with those that struck a strong chord of response in them. Encourage different viewpoints, but ask students to talk through their ideas beyond their first impressions–e.g., by considering the fuller implications of their positions and giving concrete examples to support their views.

The items in the Questionnaire all relate to themes and issues—e.g., equal justice, heroism, vigilante action, language differences—in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The discussion sets the scene, then, for the teleconference or for study or review of the novel or the film.

1. All men are created equal.
2. Girls should act like girls.
3. It's okay to be different.
4. Nobody is all bad or all good.
5. Some words are so offensive that they should never be stated or written.
6. Under our justice system, all citizens are treated fairly in our courts of law.
7. The old adage, "Sticks and stones may break your bones, but words will never hurt you'," is true.
8. Speaking standard grammar proves that a person is smart.
9. A hero is born, not made.
10. No one is above the law.
11. Education is the great equalizer.
12. When the law does not succeed in punishing criminals, citizens should do so.

'Girls should act like girls.'

American Film Institute Stills Collection

Activity 4—Exploring Stereotypes

If your students have not worked with the concept of stereotypes, explain that a stereotype is a way of "labeling" categories of people in rigid ways—usually, unfavorable ways. Ask whether the labels below carry connotations that are stereotypical. If so, what are the qualities that are attached to the stereotype? Are some labels themselves clearly negative words that are substitutes for favorable, or at least neutral, terms?

jock	**preppie**	**bookworm**
dude	**lawyer**	**motorcyclist**
grunge	**townie**	**cheerleader**
babe	**tomboy**	**televangelist**
hunk	**redneck**	**computer geek**

Ask students to suggest and discuss stereotypes that are not on the list. Use these activities to prepare students for a discussion of stereotypes held by some of the characters in *TKM*, an issue likely to be among those raised for discussion during the teleconference. (Note: If some of the stereotypes are not known to your students, you can be a resource, giving your impressions of the stereotypical qualities.)

WEB SITE Visit **Pre-Teleconference Activities** under "Preparation Activities for the Broadcast" for **Outward Appearances and Inner Qualities, Role Playing**, and **Sentence Starters**

NCTE Readings and Resources

The materials below deal with literature and teaching strategies related to issues raised in this Teaching Guide. The asterisked (*) items are available in single copies at no charge. Send a self-addressed stamped envelope to NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL, 61801-1096. For information about ordering the other materials, call 1-800-369-6283, ext. 235.

Books for You: An Annotated Booklist for Senior High Students (1995). Ed Leila Christenburg.

* "Common Ground." NCTE/ International Reading Association Joint Statement on Intellectual Freedom (1993).

Crossing the Mainstream: Multicultural Perspectives in Teaching Literature (1994) Eileen Iscoff Oliver.

Literature Instruction: A Focus on Student Response (1992). Ed. Judith Langer

NCTE Guidelines for Dealing With Censorship of Nonprint Materials (1993).

* "NCTE Guidelines for Selection of Materials for English Language Arts Programs" (1996).

Preserving Intellectual Freedom: Fighting Censorship In Our Schools (1994) Ed. Jean E. Brown.

Reading The Movies: Twelve Great Films and How to Teach Them (1992) William Costanzo.

* "Selection and Retention of Instructional Materials – What the Courts Have Said" SLATE Starter Sheet, Aug.,1995 Mary Moe.

• *Social Issues in the English Classroom* (1992) Eds. M. Hurlbert and Mark Totten

* "The Student's Right to Read," NCTE recommended procedures for fair processing of book challenges (1982).

Tapping Potential: English and Language Arts for Black Learners (1985) Ed. Charlotte Brooks.

A Teacher's Introduction to Reader-Response Theories (1993) Richard Beach

Teaching Literature in the Middle School: Fiction NCTE collection of teaching ideas (1996).

Teaching Literature In High School: The Novel NCTE collection of teaching ideas (1995).

Teaching Values in the Literature Classroom: A Public School and Catholic School View (1992) Charles Suhor and Bernard Suhor.

• *Your Reading – Middle School/Junior High Booklist.* (1995) Eds. Barbara Samuels and Kylene Beers.

Planning/Writing Team

The following team of teachers, teacher educators, and humanities scholars prepared this guide with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities

NCTE Team:

Gwendolyn Alexander, Lead Teacher
English Content Specialist for the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) A former high school English teacher, she is responsible for the Arts and Humanities Teachers' Collaborative and the DCPS English Language Arts Curriculum Framework.

Dr. William Costanzo
Teaches English and film at Westchester Community College in Vahhalla, New York. A former chair on NCTE's Committee on Film Study and director of the Media Commission, Bill speaks and writes regularly on the connections between English and media education. His book, *Reading the Movies*, is available through NCTE.

Judith Kelly
Teacher in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) for over 20 years and currently directs the D.C. Area Writing Project. She is also on the Advisory Board for the DCPS English Language Arts and History Curriculum Framework Project.

Dr. Charles Suhor
Deputy Executive Director for the National Council of Teachers of English. A former high school English teacher and K-12 English Supervisor in New Orleans Public Schools, he has written widely about interdisciplinary studies and the teaching of English language arts.

Guest Scholar Team:

Dr. Joanne Gabbin
Ph.D. in English Language and Literature, University of Chicago, concentration in American literature with special emphasis on Black literature. Presently, Director of the Honors Program and Professor of English at James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia. She teaches courses in Black literature and Honors.

Claudia Durst Johnson
Harper Lee scholar, author, former chair of the English Department at University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa, currently resides in Berkeley, California.

Prince William County Public Schools Team:

Larry Bell
Supervisor of Multicultural Education

Mark Kozlowski
High School English Teacher, Brentsville H.S.

Penny Lake
High School English teacher, Potomac H.S.

Sandra Munnell
Mockingbird Website Webmaster and High School English Teacher, Woodbridge H.S.

Catherine Turner
High School English Teacher, Woodbridge H.S.

Phyllis Peterson
High School English Teacher, Osbourn Park H.S.

Project Director:

Stan Woodward
Coordinator of Distance Learning Producer, *To Kill A Mockingbird: Then and Now*

HOST

Charlayne Hunter-Gault

Host, Programs 1 and 2

Charlayne Hunter-Gault is known to millions of Americans as a national correspondent for the PBS *NewsHour*. She is known to history as the first African American woman to attend the University of Georgia , breaking the "color line" and passing through a crowd who jeered her on a January morning in 1961, experiencing first-hand the irrationality of adult racism. Charlayne will use news footage and her personal experience to comment on the time when Harper Lee wrote and published her novel and the film was released. After setting the social and historical context for the novel and the film, Charlayne will lead our panelists and audience in a discussion of the novel and film and how it has a continuing impact into our day and time.

PANELISTS

Gwendolyn M. Alexander

Lead Teacher for NCTE Review Team and Guide contributor/advisor

Gwen is an English Content Specialist for the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), a former high school English teacher, and is responsible for the Arts and Humanities Teachers' Collaborative and the DCPS English Language Arts Curriculum Framework. Gwen was recommended by NCTE to serve as lead teacher for the Review Team in preparation of the Teacher Study Guide. She will be a guest panelist on the Program 1 broadcast.

Dr. William Costanzo

Guest scholar, member of NCTE Review Team and Guide contributor/advisor

Bill serves the project as our specialist in media education. He teaches English and film at Westchester Community College in Valhalla, N.Y. and is former chair of NCTE's Committee on Film Study and director of the NCTE Media Commission. Bill teaches *TKM* annually, and will lead discussion in the second broadcast—the two-hour Lyceum featuring a dialogue about the making of and the impact of the film. Bill is well acquainted with interactive technologies and their use in the education of students and served as a member of the writing and NCTE Review Team planning process for the guide.

Dr. Joanne V. Gabbin

Guest scholar and Guide contributor/advisor;

Dr. Gabbin brings her creativity and interests crossing over several disciplines and activities to the project. Director of the Honors Program and Professor of English at James Madison University, with a Ph.D in English Language and Literature from the University of Chicago (concentration in American Literature with an emphasis on Black Literature), Joanne directs the Honors Program at J.M.U. She has a special interest in African American literature, poetry, art and culture. Dr. Gabbin was recommended to the project by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities.

Claudia Durst Johnson

Lead Harper Lee scholar, program consultant and Guide contributor/advisor

Claudia has enjoyed a personal acquaintance with Harper Lee. Both she and Harper Lee were associated with the University of Alabama, where Johnson served as Chair of the English Department. In 1996, Claudia left a 23-year career as English professor and administrator at the university to write and edit full-time in California. She has written ten books including three on 19th-century American theatre, two on Nathaniel Hawthorne, and two on Harper Lee: *Understanding To Kill A Mockingbird: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historic Documents* and *Threatening Boundaries*.

SPECIAL GUESTS

Mary Badham (Scout)

Special guest, Program 2

Mary Badham, with no prior screen acting experience, and in competition with 2,000 other applicants, won the role of Atticus's tomboy daughter, Scout, in the film adaptation of *TKM*. She won a best supporting actress Oscar nomination for her performance. Mary appeared in two other films, *This Property Is Condemned* and *Let's Kill Uncle* (both 1966), and on TV episodes of *Dr. Kildare* and *Twilight Zone* before retiring from the screen. She lives with her husband and children on a farm in Virginia, and is active each year in visiting schools and lecturing to audiences nationally about the film classic.

Phillip Alford (Jem)

Special Guest, Program 2

Joining Mary Badham on stage will be her on-screen brother, "Jem." Phillip lives in Alabama with his wife and children and is in the construction business. He will be reunited with Mary Badham, Brock Peters and (hopefully) Gregory Peck on stage for the first time.

Brock Peters (Tom Robinson),

Special Guest, Program 2

Brock Peters was one of the leading Black film actors of the 1960s and 1970s. He made his stage debut in the 1943 production of *Porgy and Bess* and first appeared on the screen in *Carmen Jones* (1954). His memorable performance as Tom Robinson in *TKM* continues to stir audiences. Mr. Peters will be appearing on stage for the first time with both Scout and Jem to discuss the film with a national audience of students.

Gregory Peck (Atticus)

Special Guest (tentative), Program 2

Gregory Peck, while a student in pre-med at Berkeley, traveled to New York where he saw *I Married An Angel* with Vera Zorina. His priorities suddenly changed and he withdrew from pre-med, joining a small theater group on campus. In 1939, Peck returned to New York City, won a scholarship to the prestigious Neighborhood Playhouse School of Dramatics, and went on to a remarkable career as one of America's most honored and treasured actors. It has been said by many that Mr. Peck's zenith as a film actor was *To Kill a Mockingbird*, for which he won an Oscar—the Academy Award for Best Actor—for his portrayal of Atticus Finch. Mr. Peck has been invited to reunite with his two *Mockingbird* children and with Brock Peters so that the story of the making of *TKM* can be passed on to this generation of students nationwide.

Members of the Writing and Planning Team for the Teacher Study Guide and the Lyceum

Team members from NCTE and Prince William County Schools (see page 14) will also be available to respond to student questions during the live broadcasts.

Program Descriptions

Teacher Workshop Teleconference/Orientation
April 10 (One Hour)

This workshop for teachers planning to participate in the live teleconferences will feature Harper Lee scholar Claudia Durst Johnson, Supervisor of Multicultural Education Larry Bell, Mockingbird Website coordinator Sandra Munnell, and lead teachers who served on the writing team for the Teacher Study Guide. By viewing this program teachers will be familiarized with the Teacher Study Guide, the Mockingbird Website, and how to prepare students for interactivity with the live broadcasts, including how to submit questions to panelists and guests. Teachers must register for the free workshop to receive the satellite coordinates. See below for the registration form and phone and fax numbers.

Program 1
The Novel: Then and Now
April 24 (One Hour)

Host Charlayne-Hunter Gault, sharing her own experiences, will connect students of this generation to the social and historical context for the novel– the period of the Civil Rights Movement when the novel was written and published by Harper Lee. After viewing news footage from the late '50s and early '60s, Ms. Hunter-Gault will then join noted Harper Lee scholar Claudia Durst Johnson, Dr. Joanne Gabbin, and other panelists to lead students in a discussion of the novel's impact "then and now." A special feature of the program will be Johnson sharing with students her insights into Harper Lee, with whom she has a personal acquaintance, as well as fresh information and new insights into the novel, including a discussion of the gothic in *TKM*.

Program 2
The Film: Then and Now
April 25 (Two Hours)

Host Charlayne Hunter-Gault will introduce NCTE English and film teacher Bill Costanzo, and special guests, including representatives of AFI and members of the cast of *TKM*: Mary Badham (Scout), Brock Peters (Tom Robinson), Phillip Alford (Jem), and, tentatively, Gregory Peck (Atticus). Costanzo will move us through the cast's story and recollections of the making of *TKM*, then to an analysis of scenes with comments by the cast, creative team and panelists. **Our host will present to our guests pre-selected questions sent in advance by students via fax** while students calling the toll-free number will present questions and talk directly to the panelists and guests during the live broadcast. **Students should fax questions to 703-791-7378 prior to April 18.**

Special Thanks for Support of *To Kill a Mockingbird: Then and Now*

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